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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this department. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer.

THE FIRST TRAINING SCHOOL FOR NURSES IN AMERICA

DEAR EDITOR: In Miss Goodrich's excellent "appreciation" of Louisa Lee Schuyler, which appeared in the September issue of the *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING*, she sustains the claim made for Miss Schuyler of having originated the first training school for nurses in America, that attached to the Bellevue Hospital in New York, quoting the words of President Butler in conferring the degree of LL.D. upon Miss Schuyler in June, and the message of congratulation sent by the three national nursing organizations convened in San Francisco.

While it seems ungracious to pluck even one leaf from Miss Schuyler's crown of laurels, justice to the truth makes it necessary to correct an error which has gained such wide circulation. The Bellevue Hospital Training School was started in May, 1873. On September 1, 1872, the training school of the New England Hospital for Women and Children in Boston began its work. A brief statement of the establishment of this school is so clearly given by Dr. Alfred Worcester in his *Nurses for Our Neighbors* that I take the liberty of quoting a few sentences:

"To Dr. Susan Dimock, who became the resident physician of the New England Hospital for Women and Children in 1872, belongs the honor of having started the first real training school for nurses in America. She had just returned from Europe. After completing her medical education in Zurich, she had spent some time in Kaiserswerth, and in England she had made the acquaintance of Florence Nightingale.

"As might have been expected, she was well primed with enthusiasm for her pioneer work. She was the first in this country to urge well-educated young women to leave their comfortable homes in order to fit themselves by study and hard work for the profession of nursing. Only those of us who remember the opposition she encountered from the families and friends of the young women she thus inspired, can appreciate Dr. Dimock's great service. Most unfortunate was her loss on the ill-fated steamship *Schiller* in 1875.

"This first American training school for nurses began September 1, 1872, with five probationers . . . They were trained in surgical and medical as well as in obstetrical nursing. Only twelve regular lectures were given them, but they received most valuable instruction from the attending physicians, and especially from Dr. Zakrzewska. The course was for one year; and the first to complete it, and so the first nurse to receive an American diploma, was Miss Linda Richards, whose autobiography, lately published, serves as the early history of many of the principal training schools in this country which were established under her superintendence."

Dr. Worcester, in preparing this statement, had access to the early reports and private papers of the hospital.

In October of 1873, Miss Richards, the first graduate of this school, became the night superintendent of the Bellevue school, which had been established the May previous.

The New England Hospital for Women and Children not only actually organized the first training school for nurses in America, but when incorporated in 1863, its intention "To train nurses for the care of the sick" was stated in its by-laws, and it was the first institution in this country chartered with that object definitely expressed. This charter was granted by the Massachusetts Legislature, March 13, 1863.

ALICE B. CROSBY (MRS. WM. O.).

Jamaica Plain, Mass.

REPLY TO "SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR NURSE"

DEAR EDITOR: After reading the protest of the Spanish-American War nurse, which was printed in the October number, may I, and a number of friends, send a few words of neutral protest? We, as true Americans, should agree on the peace problem. Why should this nurse attack Germany? Because American citizens were drowned aboard English vessels? Were they not sufficiently warned against traveling on vessels of the warring nations? How did Germany dare to tackle England, knowing her as a ruler over the seas, and her renowned naval force? Why does she mention Belgium, because Germany invaded that country? Did not Germany offer to pay indemnity for any destruction she might cause, Yes. No doubt nothing will be said about the landing of the English and French troops in poor little Greece, without that country's approval. There was no offer from England to that country for any destruction she might cause. Why does England insist on naming cotton contraband, but she may be supplied with ammunition. Then too, every interested American knows what England has always been to the United States. What was the cause of the Revolution? It was a German, Major-General Von Steuben, who drilled Washington's armies, which aided in making us free from England. Was it not England who encouraged the Civil War, by supplying us with ammunition, making that war so bitter, and to last so long? England, as far as history goes, has always rolled the stones, and let some one else throw them. Now then, let us own up to the fact that, in the bottom of our hearts, we have a great deal for which to thank Germany, especially education. The United States must look after its investments, the majority of which are in the countries of the Allies, hence our sympathy. Further more, as a nurse, it is wrong to uphold any war.

New York.

A NEUTRAL AMERICAN NURSE.

[While the letter department is open for the free expression of the JOURNAL readers' opinions, it would seem that letters such as this and the one in the October number to which it refers, accomplish nothing—ED.]